

July 15, 2016

WALK TO RAISE AWARENESS TO THE BENEFITS OF BREASTFEEDING

Public invited to show their support for mothers and babies



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Tallahassee, Fla.—The Florida Department of Health in Leon County, the WIC nutrition program, the Capital Area Breastfeeding Coalition and the Capital Area Healthy Start Coalition are co-sponsoring a walk to raise awareness to the health benefits of breastfeeding to both mother and child.

The walk is scheduled during World Breastfeeding Week (August 1-7).

The public is invited to Crum Box Gastgarden in Railroad Square Art Park, located at 602 Industrial Drive in Tallahassee, at 8 a.m. on August 6 to register for the short walk. The walk starts at 9 a.m.

Organizers will have water on hand for walkers and goodie bags for the first 100 participants to register. There will also be a raffle following the walk.

“Breastfeeding promotion and education is a major component of the WIC program in Leon County,” Dykibra Gaskin said. “We strive to ensure that all mothers are educated about breastfeeding and receive the resources they need for breastfeeding success.”

Gaskin is public health nutrition program director for the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program at DOH-Leon.

According to Gaskin, about 77 percent of mothers in Leon County initiate breastfeeding.

DOH-Leon has breastfeeding peer counselors and staff trained as certified lactation counselors who oversee weekly breastfeeding support groups in the community.

DOH-Leon Health Officer Claudia Blackburn said the walk can raise awareness not only to the benefits of breastfeeding and DOH-Leon’s services in this regard, but also to the need for developing policies and practices that make it easy and safe for mothers to nurse their babies.

“We need to create the conditions that make breastfeeding the easy choice, such as workplace policies that support breastfeeding and pumping at work,” Blackburn said, “policies that assure a clean, secure space for women to breastfeed and express milk.”

For more information on DOH-Leon’s community outreach on breastfeeding, call (850) 606-8075.

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